

CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for use with a telephone calling card, the card bearing a telephone access number, the card bearing a first PIN number obscured by an opaque scratch-off material, the card bearing a second PIN number obscured by an opaque scratch-off material, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a first telephone call from a first caller at the telephone access number;

via the first telephone call, receiving the first PIN number and connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the first caller;

receiving a second telephone call from a second caller at the telephone access number;

via the second telephone call, receiving the second PIN number and connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the second caller.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the second caller after receiving the second PIN number takes place after the first PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the card further bears a third PIN number obscured by an opaque scratch-off material, the method further comprising the steps of:

receiving a third telephone call from a third caller at the telephone access number;

via the third telephone call, receiving the third PIN number and connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the third caller.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 3 wherein the step of connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the second caller after receiving the second PIN number takes place

after the first PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call, and wherein the step of connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the third caller after receiving the third PIN number takes place after the second PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call.

5. (currently amended) A method for use with a telephone calling card, the card bearing a telephone access number, the card bearing a first PIN number obscured by an opaque scratch-off material, the card bearing a second PIN number obscured by an opaque scratch-off material, the method comprising the steps of:

scratching off the opaque scratch-off material obscuring the first PIN number;

using the first PIN number with the telephone access number to make a first at least one long-distance telephone call;

scratching off the opaque scratch-off material obscuring the second PIN number; and

using the second PIN number with the telephone access number to make a second at least one long-distance telephone call.

6. (original) The method of claim 5 wherein the step of scratching off the opaque scratch-off material obscuring the second PIN number takes place after the first PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 5 wherein the card further bears a third PIN number obscured by an opaque scratch-off material, the method further comprising the steps of:

scratching off the opaque scratch-off material obscuring the third PIN number; and

using the third PIN number with the telephone access number to make a third at least one long-distance telephone call.

8. (original) The method of claim 7 wherein the step of scratching off the opaque scratch-off material obscuring the second PIN number takes place after the first PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call, and wherein the step of scratching off the opaque scratch-off material obscuring the third PIN number takes place after the second PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call.

9. (original) Apparatus comprising:

a card;

the card bearing a telephone access number;

the card bearing a first PIN number obscured by an opaque scratch-off material;

the card bearing a second PIN number obscured by an opaque scratch-off material;

the card bearing a third PIN number obscured by an opaque scratch-off material;

the card bearing a fourth PIN number obscured by an opaque scratch-off material;

the card bearing a fifth PIN number obscured by a scratch-off material;

each PIN number associated with a respective prepaid amount of long-distance telephone service.

10. (currently amended) A method for use with a telephone calling card, the card bearing a telephone access number, the card bearing a first PIN number, the card bearing a second PIN number, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a first telephone call from a first caller at the telephone access number;

via the first telephone call, receiving the first PIN number and connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the first caller;

receiving a second telephone call from a second caller at the telephone access number;

via the second telephone call, receiving the second PIN number and connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the second caller.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein the step of connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the second caller after receiving the second PIN number takes place after the first PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 10 wherein the card further bears a third PIN number, the method further comprising the steps of:

receiving a third telephone call from a third caller at the telephone access number;

via the third telephone call, receiving the third PIN number and connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the third caller.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 12 wherein the step of connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the second caller after receiving the second PIN number takes place after the first PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call, and wherein the step of connecting at least one long-distance telephone call for the third caller after receiving the third PIN number takes place after the second PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call.

14. (currently amended) A method for use with a telephone calling card, the card bearing a telephone access number, the card bearing a first PIN number, the card bearing a second PIN number, the method comprising the steps of:

using the first PIN number with the telephone access number to make a first at least one long-distance telephone call;

using the second PIN number with the telephone access number to make a second at least one long-distance telephone call.

15. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein the step of using the second PIN number takes place after the first PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call.

16. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 wherein the card further bears a third PIN number, the method further comprising the steps of:

using the third PIN number with the telephone access number to make a third at least one long-distance telephone call.

17. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein the step using the the second PIN number takes place after the first PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call, and wherein the step of using the third PIN number takes place after the second PIN number ceases to be usable to make any long-distance telephone call.

18. (original) A method for use by a card maker, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving from a long-distance telephone service provider groups of PIN numbers, each group to be associated with a respective calling card and each PIN number associated with a respective amount of prepaid long-distance telephone service;

printing calling cards;

for each calling card, printing on the calling card PIN numbers from a group;

for each calling card, applying a an opaque scratch-off material to obscure the PIN numbers;
and

distributing the calling cards to users.

19. (original) A method for use by a long-distance telephone service provider, the method comprising the steps of:

providing to a card maker groups of PIN numbers, each group to be associated with a respective calling card and each PIN number associated with a respective amount of prepaid long-distance telephone service; and

providing long-distance telephone service to users of the PIN numbers.

20. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the first caller and the second caller are the same person.

21. (new) The method of claim 1 wherein the first caller and the second caller are different persons.

22. (new) The method of claim 3 wherein the second caller and the third caller are the same person.

23. (new) The method of claim 3 wherein the second caller and the third caller are different persons.

24. (new) The method of claim 10 wherein the first caller and the second caller are the same person.

25. (new) The method of claim 10 wherein the first caller and the second caller are different persons.

26. (new) The method of claim 12 wherein the second caller and the third caller are the same person.

27. (new) The method of claim 12 wherein the second caller and the third caller are different persons.